IN THE CLAIMS

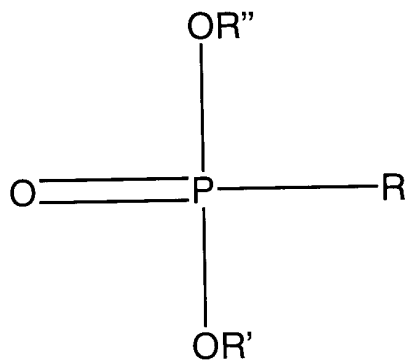Before claim 1, insert -- What is claimed is: --

Please cancel claims 1-8.

Please amend the following claims:

In claim 15, before "of preventing accretion", delete "Method" and insert -- A method--.
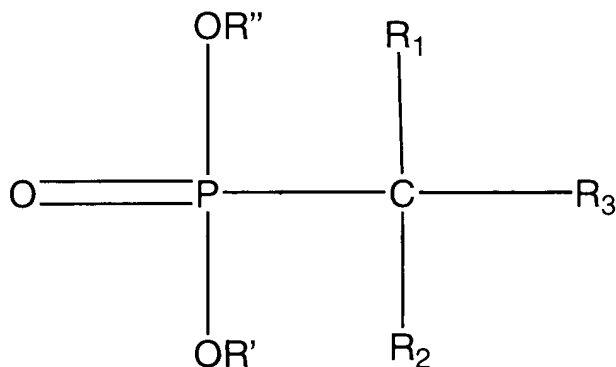
Please add the following claims:

Claim 17.   A drilling fluid being water-based and having an inhibitive component to reduce the hydration of shale further comprising an additive in accordance with the formula

$$O = P \begin{array}{c} OR'' \\ | \\ \\ | \\ OR' \end{array} R$$

where R, R' and R" are groups of non-polymeric character.

Claim 18.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, comprising an additive in accordance with the formula

$$O = P \begin{array}{c} OR'' \\ | \\ \end{array} C \begin{array}{c} R_1 \\ | \\ \end{array} R_3$$
$$\begin{array}{c} | \\ OR' \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{c} | \\ R_2 \end{array}$$

where R1, R2 and R3 are groups of non-polymeric character.

Claim 19.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, wherein the additive is based on a phosphor derivative of the succinic acid.

Claim 20.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, wherein the additive is based on a short chain phosphorylated hydrocarbon.

Claim 21.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, comprising the additive in a concentration of up to about 10% weight by volume.

Claim 22.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, being a reactive anionic drilling fluid.

Claim 23.   The drilling fluid of claim 17, being a phosphate-based drilling fluid.

Claim 24.   The drilling fluid of claim 21, being a silicate-based drilling fluid.